

NCSA 499, The Anglo-American Heritage and Social Well-Being
5 Quarter Credit Hours
London, Winter, 2008

The Anglo-American countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, share more than the English language and their historic ties to Great Britain. They differ from other industrialized societies in their legal traditions, approach to social welfare, and social outcomes, including the well-being of their citizenry. This class examines these differences historically and in contemporary times. Particular attention is paid to the experiences of children, focusing on poverty, employment and unemployment, education, delinquency and crime, health, and social support and programs.

Course Objectives

Numerous scholarly articles and books have documented distinctions in the well-being of residents of different countries and how these differences are related to differences in social policy. One of the most long-standing findings in this area is how the various “Anglo-American” countries differ from those with other legal and cultural traditions. London is truly the base of the “mother country” of this tradition and thus is a perfect place to understand both the nature of these differences and their genesis. The class will begin with a discussion of the differences between “families of nations” and then move to studies of ways in which these differences are reflected in social policies and social issues. While having lower division social science classes would be helpful, the class is open to students of all majors.

Comparisons will generally involve countries that belong to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). All 6 of the major Anglo-American countries belong to the OECD, as do all other major industrialized countries.

Excursions

Several excursions will be incorporated into the class. One will be a visit to the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol, which can help students understand the historical and cultural context of the “Anglo American” tradition. We will also visit international nonprofit organizations, such as the Salvation Army and OXFAM, that are based in London and at least one policy maker or practitioner in the social services and visit a local social service agency. These excursions can help students understand the range of approaches to social issues used throughout the world.

Class Requirements

The class will generally be run as a seminar with students responsible for leading discussions on material. At times, however, the instructor will also present material and lead discussions. Grades will be based on class participation (20% of the grade), an extensive term paper (40% of the grade), and a final exam (40% of the grade). The exam will cover both readings and material discussed in class. The paper will require students to choose a particular area (e.g. laws regarding legitimacy, policies for foster care of

children, old age support) and compare issues and policies of one Anglo-American country with those for one country in another family group.

Course readings/texts

The following books will be read in part or in their entirety. In addition, as noted in the class schedule, a few articles and materials from other sources will be required.

- Esping-Andersen, Gosta. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton University Press.
- Rainwater, Lee and Timothy M. Smeeding. 2003. *Poor Kids in a Rich Country. America's Children in Comparative Perspective*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Schut, J.M. Wildeboer, J.C. Vrooman, and P.T. deBeer. 2001. *On Worlds of Welfare: Institutions and their Effects in Eleven Welfare States*. The Hague: Social and Cultural Planning Office.
- OECD. 2005. *Extending Opportunities: How Active Social Policy Can Benefit Us All*. Paris: OECD.
- Castles, Francis G. 2004. *The Future of the Welfare State: Crisis Myths and Crisis Realities*. Oxford University Press.

Class Schedule

The class schedule will be adjusted, as necessary, to accommodate excursions.

Week 1: Overview and Introduction to the Distinctions Between Nations

Read:

- Gosta-Andersen, *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, pp. 1-78 (chapters 1-3).
- Rubellin-Devichi, Jacqueline. 1997. "Family Law: The Continuity of National Characteristics," Pp. 45-60 in J. Commaille and F. deSingly (eds.) *The European Family*. Kluwer Academic Publishers.

In this week we will read materials that introduce the ideas of "families of nations" and the cultural and legal differences between groups of nations.

Week 2: The Views of Other Authors on the "Three Worlds"

Read:

- Schut, et al, pp. 3-40
- Castles, pp. 1-46
- Sims-Schouten, Wendy. 2000. "Child Care Services and Parents' Attitudes in England, Finland, and Greece." Pp. 270-288 in Astrid Pfenning and Thomas Bahle (eds.) *Families and Family Policies in Europe: Comparative Perspectives*. Peter Lang.

These readings will allow us to continue the discussion of the first week, but with somewhat different foci. The Schut et al book is directed more to empirical research on

the area, the Castles book is more focused on social policy, and the Sims-Schouten article is a very nice empirical analysis of attitudinal differences.

Students will need to choose the topic for their term paper by the end of this week.

Week 3: The Role of Social Policy

Read

- Stockard, Jean. 2003. "Social Science, Social Policy, and Lethal Violence: Looking for Upstream Solutions: 2003 Presidential Address to the Pacific Sociological Association," *Sociological Perspectives* 46 (September, 2003): 291-308.
- OECD, pp. 17-56 (Chapters 1-3)

In this week we will address the issue of how social science relates to social policy and the different ways in which social policies are developed and implemented.

Week 4: Children and Poverty

Read:

- Rainwater and Smeeding, pp. 1-56 (Introduction and chapters 1-3)
- OECD, pp. 57-98

One of the most striking differences between the families of nations is the extent to which children are in poverty and, especially, the ways in which the countries have enacted policies to deal with this issue. The Rainwater and Smeeding book is written by Americans for an American audience, but uses international data. The OECD publication is written for a more international audience.

Weeks 5-6: Poverty, Employment, and Social Inequality

Read:

- Rainwater and Smeeding, pp. 57-144 (chapters 4-8)
- OECD, pp. 99-142
- Schut et al (entire volume)
- Esping-Andersen, pp. 79-221 (chapters 4-8)

The issue of poverty involves issues of employment, inequality, and policies to address these issues. These issues are complex with fascinating differences between the countries in areas such as employment policies, attitudes regarding unemployment, policy differences in taxation and dealing with inequality. Thus, we will devote two weeks (and a fairly large set of readings) to these issues.

Week 7: The Elderly and Changing Demographics

Read:

- OECD, pp. 143-190
- Bradshaw, Jonathon and Emese Mayhew. 2003. "Are Welfare States Financing their Growing Elderly Populations at the Expense of their Children?" *Family Matters* 66: 20-25.

All of the modern industrialized countries have growing aged populations. Many of them also have declining birth rates, although the extent of this decline also varies across groups of countries, both historically and in contemporary times. As a result, societies face a variety of social policy issues from the provision of pensions to support the elderly, to choices regarding services to children, to policies regarding immigrant workers to help fill labor needs.

Students are required to turn in a list of references for their papers by the end of week 7.

Week 8: Health Issues in International Perspective

Read:

- "Cohort Variations in Suicide Rates Among Families of Nations: An Analysis of Cohorts Born from 1875 through 1985," Jean Stockard and Robert M. O'Brien *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 47 (February, 2006): 5-33.
- Wilkinson, Richard G. 1997. "Socioeconomic Determinants of Health: Health Inequalities: Relative or Absolute Material Standards. *British Medical Journal*, 314: 591 ff.
- Castilla, Emilio J. 2004. "Organizing Health Care: A Comparative Analysis of National Institutions and Inequality Over Time." *International Sociology* 19: 403-435.

One of the most fascinating aspects of comparative work is that the wealth of nations is not directly associated with the health of its citizenry. Readings for this week will look at some of this literature. In this week we will also discuss variations within the families of nations.

Students who want to have feedback on their papers may turn in drafts by the end of this week.

Week 9 – Looking to the Future

Read:

- Castles, pp. 73-182 (chapters 4-8)
- Gosta-Andersen, pp. 221-229 (chapter 9)
- Dimitrova, Antoaneta and Bernard Steunenbergh. 2000. "The Search for Convergence of National Policies in the European Union: An Impossible Quest?" *European Union Politics* 1: 201-226.

The readings for this week involve the authors' views about what the future holds, especially as some Anglo-American countries join the European Union.

Weeks 10 and 11 –Student Presentations and Final Exam

Students will be required to give short presentations on their papers in week 10. The final exam will be given in week 11.